Glossary

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Area effect: A distinct species composition or abundance in the interior of a patch. The number of species increases with an increase in patch size to a minimum area point beyond which few species are added with increased area.

Biodiversity: The variety of life forms, number of species but also including ecosystem types and genetic variation within a species.

Connectivity: A measure of the connectedness or continuity of a corridor.

Consensus: A collective agreement.

Conservation corridor: A linear strip of vegetation natural or planted that differs from the adjacent surroundings and which functions to conserve soil, water, plants, wildlife, or fish resources.

Corridor: A linear patch that differs from its surroundings.

Dispersal: A one way movement of an animal from one home range to a new home range.

Ecoregion: An area with similar biological, physical, and climatic characteristics that differs from adjacent areas, frequently used for large scale planning studies.

Edge effect: A distinct species composition or abundance in the outer border of a patch.

Edge to interior ratio: The ratio of the linear feet of the periphery of a patch to the area of the patch.

Eutrophication: Nutrient enrichment of waterbodies resulting in luxurious organic growth and depletion of dissolved oxygen.

Fragmentation: The breaking up of large patches of vegetation into smaller patches.

GAP analysis: A wildlife planning process that provides a quick overview of the potential distribution and conservation status of wildlife species in the region or watershed.

Habitat: The ecosystem where a species lives.

Heterogeneous: Consisting of dissimilar elements.

Homogeneous: Consisting of similar elements.

Horizontal structure: The horizontal spacing of plants within a plant community. For a single species, the spacing may be regular, clumped, or random.

Interior species: Species found primarily or only distant from borders.

Interspersion: The level of integration of plant communities both natural and introduced.

Juxtaposition: The proximity of plant communities to each other; contiguity.

Lek: A traditional area where certain species of grouse (sharptail and sage grouse, for example) gather to breed.

Limiting factor: An environmental factor limiting the growth of an individual or a population.

Matrix: The background component of landscapes within which patches and corridors exist.

Metapopulation: Wildlife populations that are distributed as spatially separated populations linked by dispersal.

Minimum viable population: The smallest number of individuals required to sustain a population for the long term.

Niche: The actions of an animal; its occupation.

Parasitism: An action that allows an animal to survive by dependence on and at the expense of another animal.

Patch: Generally a plant and animal community that is surrounded by areas with different community structure; however, a patch may be devoid of life.

Patchiness: The density of patches of all types.

Protected reserve: A large patch managed for biodiversity, a wildlife refuge for example.

Stepping stone patch: A patch that is colonized or used seasonally in migration by a species.

Succession: A species replacement process often through a sequence of recognizable stages.

Vertical structure: The distinct strata (layers) of vegetation, the size and number of which depend on the life forms present.

Vulnerable population: Species that are generally rare and have high variability in population size. Often large species with large home ranges.

Watershed: An area drained by a stream or river and its tributaries.


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